

Date: 23 Feb. 1983

TO: Mr. Casey

FROM:

SUBJECT: Article Mentioned to You by

STAT

STAT

REMARKS:

cannot find the article he mentioned to you, but thought it might be in The Christian Science Monitor in the last few weeks.

STAT

I had Public Affairs look for the past three weeks and they have come up with the attached.

A
C
T
I
O
N

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-3

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
7 February 1983

Is the press damaging Reagan?

By Godfrey Sperling Jr.

Washington

Larry Speakes is beginning to say what Jody Powell and other press secretaries of recent presidents have said by midterm in their administrations: that the press is denigrating the President, making it difficult for him to govern.

Speakes, in his latest utterance on the subject, put it this way: "Can the modern presidency survive the modern media? Can any man in public office stand up to the daily drumbeat of morning newspapers and the

tend to stress the bad news. This is based on a theory that people, no matter what they say, are drawn to the negative headline rather than to one that says something positive.

But Speakes is wrong about the press being responsible for recent one-term presidencies. The media, in the end, are the messenger, not the message. Nixon's message was one of corruption in the White House. That was what prevented him from completing more than one term.

Ford really had a good press. Reporters liked him a lot. It can be argued that his pardoning of Nixon was the main reason Ford lost out in that razor-edge decision to Carter.

The media did not destroy Carter. Had it not been for the Kennedy challenge and the hostages-in-Iran problem Carter might have survived. But he was also the victim of a growing public desire to try new approaches to dealing with the economy.

So it was Carter's message, together with a likable opponent who had some different ideas about solving economic problems, that brought about the demise of the Carter administration after just four years.

Lyndon Johnson was only elected once. But Vietnam, not the media, did him in.

Eisenhower had two terms. And, while popular, he always had a press to deal with that was quite cynical about his abilities and eager to report anything that might denigrate him: his frequent golfing, the gifts he received, and his scrambled syntax in im-

promptu comments.

Speakes would probably say that Ike was an exception, being a great war hero. To some extent he probably was. Ike's personality and smile were particularly appealing. Virtually everyone would concede, "I like Ike."

But what Speakes doesn't seem to realize is that Reagan is doing quite well with the public — despite those negative stories about him. There's a lot of "I like Reagan" out there. The message that Reagan is doing a pretty good job is getting through to the public at large.

In the Southeast this reporter found the same public support for Reagan that is reported in the polls. Yes, it has been flagging a bit of late. But his constituents are inclined to say that the President inherited his problems from previous administrations and is doing the best he can to turn things around. Congress is accused of causing most of the problems in the past, and of still standing in the way of Reagan doing what he would like to do about the economy.

Within the white community in the middle- and upper-income brackets — where Reagan gets most of his support — the people like his message. And they scorn the media, particularly the network news programs, that tend to try to punch holes in the Reagan record.

Godfrey Sperling Jr. is chief of the Monitor's Washington bureau.

Washington letter

flashing symbols of evening news television shows?"

Speakes is particularly unhappy over what he calls the news media's tendency to downplay the President's success in bringing inflation down and, instead, to continually underscore the high unemployment rate.

"Every night," says Speakes, "we have seen the unemployed line up and march across the television screen, and I certainly would not be one to make light of the people who are unemployed.... But why is it that 10.8 percent unemployment is news but 89.2 percent of Americans who are employed and enjoy the highest standard of living are not?"

Speakes 'has' a 'point.' The media 'always

The world according to America's top television executives

Study shows most reject conservative moral values, want to change society

By John Dillin

National correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

The "television elite." They produce the programs, write the scripts, and select the shows that millions of Americans watch on prime time. But who are they? What are their goals? What are their standards?

A new study has turned up answers that could renew the debate over American TV and its portrayal of political issues, sex, business, and violence. Over 100 of TV's top people were surveyed — the cream of its creative community.

A member of TV's elite, the survey found, is usually white, male, and very well paid (over \$200,000 a year). In addition, most members of the elite:

- Seldom, if ever, attend religious services.
- Consider themselves politically liberal and regularly vote Democratic.
- Grew up in large cities.
- Favor a woman's right to an abortion.
- See nothing wrong with homosexuality.
- Don't think there is too much sex on TV.
- Think the legal system favors the wealthy.
- Think the government should redistribute income.

The survey, conducted by Linda S. Lichter, S. Robert Lichter, and Stanley Rothman, appears in the latest issue of Public Opinion magazine, a publication of the American

Enterprise Institute. Its findings, the authors say, show that the television elite clearly reject conservatives' criticism of TV entertainment.

Among those interviewed were 15 presidents of independent production companies, 10 network officials responsible for program development and selection, 18 executive producers, and 43 other producers, including 26 who are also writers.

Officials at CBS, NBC, and ABC declined comment on the survey, at least until they could give it closer study. One official did say privately, however, that the report made the TV entertainment community look considerably more liberal than it appeared to him from the inside.

Those surveyed say that TV should have a major role in

★ Please turn to Page 18

From page 1

The world according to America's top television executives

social reform in the United States. As the authors of the survey note:

"According to television's creators, they are not in it just for the money. They also seek to move their audience toward their own vision of the good society."

What is that vision? The TV elite feel that the media, business, and government currently have the greatest influence in society. But that structure is causing alienation. When asked how they would prefer that society be structured, TV's elite ranked 10 major power groups this way:

1. Consumer groups.
2. Intellectuals.
3. Blacks.
4. Feminists.
5. Business.
6. News media.
7. Unions.
8. Government agencies.
9. Religion.
10. Military.

Looking at this list, the survey's authors conclude: "It would be hard to imagine a more thorough indictment of the [present American] social order."

Why do TV's leaders hold these views? The authors looked into their backgrounds for clues.

Few of these leaders hail from Middle America. Instead, most are from large cities in California or the Boston-Washington corridor.

They come from diverse economic backgrounds, but most (9 out of 10) managed to get to college. Today, 63 percent of them earn over \$200,000 a year, and only 4 percent make less than \$75,000. One in four has a family income more than \$500,000 per year.

Most had a religious upbringing, but they have, in large part, moved toward a secular outlook. The majority (59 percent) were raised in the Jewish faith. About 25 percent

were brought up as Protestants, 12 percent as Roman Catholics. Today 93 percent seldom or never attend religious services.

This drift away from religion may explain why many in the group disagree with the Seventh Commandment. By a narrow 51-to-49 majority, they say that adultery is not wrong. On the other hand, by a 59-to-41 margin, they do agree with critics that there is too much violence on TV.

In politics, they are very liberal. Even in the Nixon landslide of 1972, the television elite was voting by an 82-to-15 margin for George McGovern for president. They also backed Hubert Humphrey over Richard Nixon (80 to 17), Jimmy Carter over Gerald Ford (72 to 25).

First and foremost, they want America to be a "humane" society. They strongly back social (as opposed to economic) liberalism. They give little weight to national defense, economic growth, or the problems of crime.